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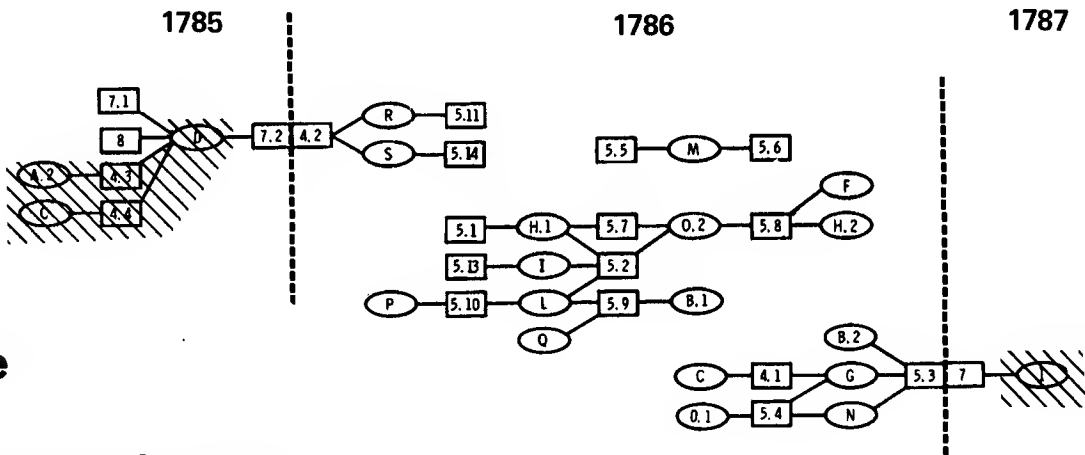
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An Experimental

DIE ANALYSIS CHART



for the

Connecticut Coppers

The "ORANGE" Group from
Abel Buell's Complex Hubs of 1786

Sequential page 572

● ● An Experimental DIE ANALYSIS CHART for the Connecticut Coppers. ● ● ●

● ● ● James C. Spilman



I. INTRODUCTION

We present in this issue a chart depicting in topographical format all of the known die varieties of the Connecticut Coppers. It is designed to illustrate on a single sheet the complex interrelationships of all of the 346 combinations of the presently known 404 dies associated with the Connecticut coinage. The arrangement of the chart is such that all varieties are grouped within four chronological areas determined by the year date appearing on the reverse die, e.g. 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788. Other arrangement within each of these chronological areas will be discussed later.

In the September 1974 issue of CNL, Edward R. Barnsley published the first such complete chart of the Connecticut Coppers including, for the first time, a graphical presentation of biennial obverses. His chart (CNL #41, p.451) was basically a die-interlock chart and, as such, considered only those circumstances where dies were related one to another by direct interlocking. He made no attempt to associate the many monogamous pairs with other groups - or, similarly, the specific relationships of small interlocked groups with other interlocked groups.

The present chart is derived directly from Mr. Barnsley's 1974 version; but, three important changes have been incorporated:

- (1) The chart has been "unfolded", that is - the interlocking dies have been graphically reorganized so that there are no cross overs or intersecting ligatures.
- (2) Where the complexity of the interlocking is severe, as in the right-central area of year 1787 where there is a heavy concentration of type 33 obverses, and it is not possible to diagram the arrangement to avoid ligature cross overs, the chart has been "decked" into a quasi-three dimensional configuration. The six ligatures between "decks" are therefore shown as dashed rather than solid lines.
- (3) The various varieties have been gathered into families having similar features of workmanship, ornamentation, devices, letter and numeral style, etc.

Most of the major characteristics of the Barnsley chart have been retained including the use of H.C. Miller's die variety designations and, graphically, the use of rectangles  to represent obverse dies and ovals  to represent reverse dies. The identification of specific groups of interlocked dies by a surrounding border and group numeral has, for the moment, been omitted.

A word about the title of our new chart is in order at this point in our introduction. First, it IS quite experimental and intended to be used in experimenting with ideas, and - further - it is of a preliminary nature and we expect it to change, to evolve with subsequent research and with the passage of time. Secondly, it is for the purpose of aiding in the analysis of individual dies in the classical sense -- "an examination of anything to distinguish its component parts, separately, or in their relationship to the whole."

Thus, it is intended as a DIE ANALYSIS chart and not a die-interlock chart in the usual sense even though die-interlocking is, of course, a major parameter. Our intention here is to define the primary usage of the diagram. The chart is specifically designed as an aid toward visualizing and understanding the many complex interrelationships and anomalies of the Connecticut Coppers, and to suggest avenues for future investigation and study.

Specific methodologies will become apparent in subsequent discussions. The writer is convinced that the explanations to many, perhaps all, of the perplexing, confusing and long misunderstood questions and theories regarding the Connecticut Coppers lie within the borders of this chart. Depicted here in topographical format are the endeavors and products, skills and mistakes, successes and failures of men and their rude 18th century technology, simply awaiting recognition by us today.

Our chart is presented on Sequential Page 577 as a fold-out sheet measuring 11" x 17". This, unfortunately, is much too small for convenient use. This size was dictated by economic necessity together with the need to retain a sheet size suitable for permanent binding. To ameliorate this situation we are producing a limited number of larger size charts about 30" x 40" for our Patrons who have a special interest in the Connecticut Coppers. These are blue-line prints and will be folded and shipped to our Patrons who care to order copies. Additional work copies of the small size 11" x 17" chart are also available. The order form is included as the final page in this issue.

There are many different types of information that can be depicted on the chart such as rarity, striking sequence, die juxtaposition, etc. To attempt to present all of this data at one time is an almost impossible task and would result in excessive complexity. So, we are limiting the chart - at the present time - to the bare essentials necessary to depict the basic framework around which we will build our discussions in future articles. The additional data developed in these future articles can be hand annotated on the chart from the published commentary and from our Patron's personal observations.

The first set of additional information to be added to the framework of the basic chart is a system of color coding to indicate specific families, or groups, of specimens exhibiting common characteristics of workmanship, ornamentation, letter styles, bust types, and so forth. We ask our Patrons to obtain a set of colored pencils and hand color their charts by shading the symbols for obverse and reverse dies in accordance with the instructions tabulated below. In general,

each set of instructions for a color group begins within a stated year and progresses from top to bottom and from left to right, first for obverses and then for reverses. Once the initial die is located for each group, the coloring process should progress smoothly across the chart. Additional color groups and other symbology will be developed in future articles.

The significance of each of the groups will be discussed in our later articles; however, for the moment, our Patrons will recognize the first of these color coded families, the ORANGE Group, as those dies produced by Abel Buell from "complex" master hubs. This group has already been discussed in this writer's article "Abel Buell - Our American Genius - Part II, The Diesinker of 1786" (CNL #37, p.424). Note that there are several interlocked dies within this group that do not exhibit the orange color designation. We urge our Patrons to study the patterns produced by the colors and then to establish in their own minds what the "common characteristics" are that are represented by each color. We also suggest that the coloring be done on one of the large size charts available on special order. Several additional copies of the smaller working chart will also be helpful.

● The ORANGE Group

1785 Obverses: 7.1, 8 and 7.2

1785 Reverses: none

1786 Obverses: 4.2, 5.11, 5.14, 5.1, 5.13, 5.10, 5.5, 5.7, 5.2, 5.9, 5.6, 5.8, 4.1, 5.4 and 5.3

1786 Reverses: R, S, P, H.1, I, L, Q, M, O.2, B.1, C, O.1, F, H.2, B.2, G, and N

1787 Obverses: 7

1787 Reverses: none

● The RED Group

1787 Obverses: 37.15, 37.7, 37.3, 37.5, 53, 37.12, 37.8, 37.13, 39.2, 37.10, 37.14, 37.1, 37.2, 37.4, 37.9, 39.1, 37.11, 56, 36, 48, 34 and 37.6

1787 Reverses: k.2, h.3, h.2, i, e, h.1, HH, ee, RR, cc.2, cc.1, k.5, k.1, ff.2, l.1, l.2, XX, k.3, ff.1, and k.4

● The BLUE Group

1787 Obverses: 17, 18, 19, 46, 20, 24, 21, 22, 45, 47, 25, 38, 27 and 26

1787 Reverses: a.2, FF, g.3, g.1, g.4, BB, GG, g.5, DD, g.2, CC, a.3, b, a.1 and AA

● The GREEN Group

1786 Obverses: 6 and 7

1786 Reverses: none

1787 Obverses: 29.1, 16.5, 28, 16.4, 16.2, 16.6, 41, 16.1, 29.2,
42 and 40

1787 Reverses: p, n, LL, m, o, NN.1, NN.2, ii, O, N, kk.2, kk.1

● The BROWN Group

1787 Obverses: 43.2, 32.3, 32.1, 43.1, 32.2, 32.6, 32.7, 30, 32.9,
32.5, 32.8 and 32.4

1787 Reverses: X.4, X.3, Y, X.2, X.1, X.6, hh.1, X.7, aa and X.5

1788 Obverses: 16.1, 16.7, 16.2 and 16.4

1788 Reverses: none

● The YELLOW Group

1787 Obverses: 2, 11.2, 5, 14, 13, 11.3, 10, 9, 15, 12 and 11.1

1787 Reverses: B, K, P, H, D, R, Q, E, S and F

1788 Obverses: 8, 7, 9, 12.1, 12.2, 11, 13 and 10

1788 Reverses: F.2, E, R, F.1, C and G

● The PURPLE Group

1786 Obverses: 1, 2.1, 2.2 and 3

1786 Reverses: A, D.1, D.3, D.2 and D.4

1787 Obverses: 4, 6.1, 1.3 and 6.2

1787 Reverses: L and M

At this point there are remaining on the chart a very large number of dies in the upper right-central section of the year 1787 that have no added color, plus a number of smaller groups arranged about the peripheral areas. The central group in the year 1787 is composed primarily of the type 33 obverse dies interlocked with type Z and W reverse dies, plus a few odds and ends; this large group will be designated as the WHITE Group and will ultimately incorporate a different method of color coding to that established in this introduction. The peripheral groups without color will be assigned appropriate designations at a future time; for the moment they stand alone by virtue of their physical isolation from the others.

An Experimental **DIE ANALYSIS CHART** for the Connecticut Coppers



PART FOUR

● The Mint Location ●



● Merchant ● Privateer ● Coinage Contractor ●

extracts from the manuscript JAMES JARVIS AND THE FUGIO COPPERS

* by DAMON G. DOUGLAS

Editor's Preface: This is the fourth of our series of extracts from the unpublished manuscript "James Jarvis and the Fugio Coppers" by the late Mr. Damon G. Douglas. The first three parts of this series covered the historical and biographical background data on James Jarvis - contractor for the Fugio Coppers of 1787 - and appeared in CNL numbers 26, 27 & 28 starting on sequential pages 261, 273 & 285 respectively. This next group of extracts will cover the numismatic aspects of Mr. Douglas' studies.

During the year 1948 Mr. Douglas examined a hoard of Fugio Cents that had been discovered in the early 1800's stored in the vaults of the Bank of New York. With the cooperation and assistance of the American Numismatic Society, Mr. Douglas conducted a detailed examination and analysis of the 1,641 remaining specimens which included measurements of weight and diameter by variety and made comparisons with other contemporary coinages, in particular some of the New Jersey varieties. He plotted the results in graphical form on six charts that appear in his manuscript. Based on these charts Mr. Douglas concluded that the Fugios in the Bank of New York hoard, as well as those specimens examined from outside the hoard, were all the product of a single mint and had all been coined within a relatively short period of time.

At this point we pick up the text from "James Jarvis and the Fugio Coppers":



While the numismatic evidence seems to point to the entire 18th century Fugio coinage having issued from a single mint, yet because of the suggestions that have appeared from time to time that the coins were also minted in New York City, Rupert, Vermont, Newburgh, New York and in Massachusetts (as well as in New Haven, Connecticut; JCS) we should not conclude our study without a critical examination of the evidence of other such mintings.

The only known evidence for New York City as the locale of any of the coining is contained in a widely copied newspaper item that appeared shortly after the action by Congress adapting the designs for the coinage. Crosby reprinted

without comment the item as the Massachusetts Centinel of August 11, 1787 carried it:

"The coinage of federal CENTS (coppers) at New York, we are told, is carrying on, and we may expect soon to see them in circulation among us . . . "

It ran in substantially the same form in the Newport (R.I.) Mercury of September 17, 1787.

A communication in The (New) Brunswick (N.J.) Gazette, August 21, 1787, gave what seems to have been a more proper timing to the story while erroneously adding half cents"

"New York. Letter from a member of Congress.
Congress having contracted for the coinage of 300 ton of copper into cents and half cents . . . this coinage will commence in a few months."

It will be remembered that Congress from 1785 through 1790 held all of its sessions in New York City. As the seat of government, that city would have been specified as the place for taking delivery of the coins. The contract had been awarded to James Jarvis of New York.

Thus the August 11 press comment quite understandably assumed the form it did without providing any real evidence to support a supposition of actual Fugio coining in New York City.

The evidence that has been supposed to connect Rupert, Vermont with the coining of Fugios all seems to have been contained in reminiscences from a grandson of the New Haven Abel Buell, a Mr. Abel Buell Moore. They were recorded by Mr. B.H.Hall of Troy in a letter dated July 18, 1855 (Crosby, p.188) to Charles I. Bushnell who made abstracts of it available to Crosby. From internal indications this same information seems to have been the basis for Hickcox's earlier undocumented statements in his An Historical Account of American Coinage. It is evident from other letters by Mr. Hall (as related by Crosby) that at this time he was trying to learn what he could about the Vermont mint and its operations by at least one visit to the site and through correspondence with descendants of its operators.

The pertinent parts of the information from Moore via Mr. Hall are that

- (1) Abel Buell designed and cut the original Fugio dies .
- (2) His son, William, not long after removed the manufactory to Rupert, Vermont.
- (3) There, with Mr. Harmon, he established the mint house of Milbrook.
- (4) He brought with him the original dies used by Abel at New Haven.
- (5) He continued at Rupert the coinage of the coppers.
- (6) Pieces of copper and specimens of the old coin are still picked up near the mill site.

Mr. Hall had informed Mr. Bushnell in a letter of March 3, 1886 that William Cooley had made the dies used at the Rupert mint and had assisted in striking the coins. Later he transmitted a letter dated June 14, 1855 in which Julian Harmon stated that his father, son of the mint owner, Ruben Harmon, thought that William Buell had cut the dies for the mint and had assisted in the striking. By June 4, 1858 Mr. Hall had found that the mint house, originally erected on Millbrook, had been later moved to the banks of the Pawlet River and that coining had been carried on in it at both locations.

In considering these bits of testimony, it may be helpful to keep in mind the following chronology:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| July 1, 1785 | The effective date of Reuben Harmon's two year coinage grant from the Vermont legislature. |
| October 24, 1785 | He was granted eight more years for coining on his plea of great expenses incurred at the mint. |
| The year 1786 | New York City Directory listed "Van Voorhis & Coley, silversmiths, 27 Hanover Square. |
| February 16, 1787 | Daniel Van Voorhis and William Cooley as residents of New York unsuccessfully petitioned for New York State copper coinage contract. |
| January 1, 1787 | Connecticut "Company for Coining Coppers" ceased coining at their New Haven mint. |
| June 7, 1787 | Machin's Mill - Rupert partnership effected with the Rupert partners, including William Coley, agreeing that on or before July 1, 1787 they would complete the coining "Works they are now erecting at Rupert" and that Harmon and Coley should have charge of the coining there. |
| July 6, 1787 | Congress determined the Fugio design by amending the recommendation of July 4. |
| July 6, 1790 | Census listed "Ruibin" Harmon and William Coley as "Heads of Families" resident in Rupert and William Buell as of Fair Haven Town in another county. |

We also should compare the style and devices of one type of the 1785 Connecticut coppers - Miller 8 - (also Miller 7.1 and 7.2; JCS) with that of the Vermont coppers of the new designs - Ryder 15 - (also Ryder 10 and 11; JCS) specified in the Act of October 24, 1786. Representative specimens are enlarged 1.5x and illustrated below.



Miller 7.2 of 1785



Ryder 10 (obv.) of 1786

Their close resemblance seems more than merely coincidental. The letter and punctuation punches constitute the only differences. Those of the Vermont specimens are the same as were used in making the dies for the original Vermont designs - Ryder 5 -. The later 1787 and 1788 Vermont dies show two entirely different style letter punch sets and workmanship - Ryder 14 and 23 -.

The complete definition of both the history and of the coinings of the Rupert mint and its people must await the completion of a much more thorough research. However - the following hypothesis would seem to fit all the presently known facts and and to reasonably explain the apparent contradiction.

It would read that William Buell moved to Rupert early enough to have assisted Harmon in setting up the mint in 1785 at its first location on Millbrook where he cut the dies for the 1785 and 1786 coins. Thus any dies that he brought with him would have been for the 1785 Connecticut coppers (Miller types 7 & 8 of 1785; JCS) the style of which he closely copied for the new 1786 Vermont design. (Had William's removal from New Haven been delayed until after the Fugio design had been determined, he could not have assisted Harmon in setting up the mint even at its final location.)

Our hypothesis would further suggest that William Coley's move from New York to Rupert occurred early in 1787 since he was still a resident of New York at the time of his February 16, 1787 petition. He assisted Harmon in setting up the mint in the final location on the Pawlet River for the specified July 1, 1787 completion required by the Machin's Mill - Rupert agreement. There he cut the dies for the Rupert part of the production of 1787 and 1788 Vermont coins.

Seventy years after the event, grandson Moore was relating family traditions. Grandfather Abel's original dies were brought to Vermont by Uncle William. Abel had made the first United States coins and had made their dies. That either he or his interrogator, Mr. Hall, should have missed the double nature of the referents is not surprising. The same sort of confusion would explain the "old coin" occasionally found at the mint site. The context makes it evident that Mr. Hall had not seen any of those finds himself. Such evidence does not seem to warrant any reasonable assumption that this Vermont enterprise ever produced any Fugio coppers.

Machin's Mill at Newburgh, New York, has been suggested by later writers as the minting place of some Fugios. The writer has been unable to find from any of them other documentation than references to other similar undocumented and unexplained statements. No thread of evidence has thus far been uncovered that would point to any connection between this mint and the Fugios.

Jacob R. Eckfeldt and William E. DuBois of the Assay Office of the Mint of the United States published in 1842 at Philadelphia A Manual of Gold and Silver Coins of all Nations Struck Within the Past Century. In a section on early State coins, page 141, they stated that "There are also other varieties, particularly the "Nova Constellatio" of thirteen stars and another piece with the same significant number of rings, cojoined, both of which were coined in Massachusetts." Since their statement stands bare without a word of evidence to support it and since the Nova Constellatio's seem adequately attributed to England by a London newspaper of 1786 (the London Morning Chronicle dated March 19, 1786), we may conclude that a Massachusetts origin for their second piece, if the referent be, as it seems, the Fugio, was equally erroneous.

Eckfeldt and DuBois may have been the source for the designation "Massachusetts Cents" occasionally applied to Fugios by cataloguers prior to 1860, e.g., Leavitt, Delisser & Co., Sale at New York, May 17, 1865:

"No. 200 4 Massachusetts Cents 'Mind Your Business 1787'

Rx. 13 rings linked together representing the 13 states.

No. 215 3 Coppers 'Nova Constallatio, 1783'.

This was the first current coin of Massachusetts. Scarce."

We have already observed in the coins, the remarkable uniformity of their diameters, the use of common hubs in the die sinking and the cross-matings that connect most of the various dies of the known varieties. This combination argues so strongly for the whole to have been the product of but a single mint and of a rather brief coining operation that, when the supposed evidence for production at other locations appears to be so illusory, it would seem justifiable to conclude that a New Haven mint was the only contemporary source of the Fugio coppers.



- ● The Re-discovery of BERMUDA by GATES, SOMERS & NEWPORT in 1609.
from T.D.Howe; Houston, Texas

(TN-64)

Having just purchased a Sommer Islands Shilling I nosed around for more information than given in Crosby. I found nothing concerning the coinage but in "English Colonies in America" by J.A.Doyle, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, published in 1889 by Henry Holt & Co., New York, pp 130-132, I did run across an interesting description of the re-discovery of Bermuda in 1609 by Gates, Somers & Newport en route to relieve the Virginia Company Colony at Jamestown. Perhaps this will also interest other CNL Patrons. (Editor's Note: See also CNL, March 1965, pp 77-82; sequential pages 136-141, RF-2).



"To such good purpose did the friends of the colony plead its cause, both in the press and the pulpit, that, in spite of the somewhat discouraging conditions of service, five hundred emigrants were collected. The character of the men to whom the management of the colony was now entrusted was a guarantee for a vigorous and upright policy. Lord Delaware had been in the spring appointed Captain-General and Governor of the English colonies to be planted in Virginia. For the present, however, he was willing to leave the control of the colony to the most experienced and capable members of the company, and the command of the present expedition was entrusted to Gates, Somers and Newport. Ratcliffe, despite his previous failure, returned with them. On the 1st of June they set sail with a fleet of nine vessels. In the very hour of departure a dispute broke out between the three leaders which in its result was nearly fatal to the colony. Being unable to settle the question of precedence, they decided that all three should sail in one ship. About the end of July a storm scattered the fleet. Seven out of nine ships at length reached Virginia, but one perished, and the Sea Venture, in which were the three leaders, was completely cut off from the rest of the fleet. The ship was, in the words of one of her crew, "so shaken, torn and leaked, that she received so much water as covered two ton of hogshead about the ballast". For five days the crew baled and pumped "without any intermission, and yet the water seemed rather to increase than to diminish; insomuch that all our men were utterly spent, tyred and disabled for longer labour, were even resolved, without any hope of their lives, to shut up the hatches, and to have committed themselves to the mercy of the sea." Some sank down, utterly exhausted, and slept; others stupefied themselves with strong drink. But there was at least one man on board who had been trained in a school where death was no stranger, and who did not think that a man could face it best drunk or sleeping. As undaunted as when in the prime of manhood he had fought his way up the cliffs above St. Jago,

Somers sat for three days and nights on the poop, scarcely eating or drinking, using all his skill to keep the vessel upright and save her from foundering. When everything seemed hopeless a cry of "land" from Somers roused the crew from their despair. By dint of hard pumping the ship was kept above water till within half a mile of shore, where, "fortunately in so great a misfortune," she stuck fast between two rocks. The whole company, one hundred and fifty in number, landed in safety, with a good part of their furniture, which the sea had spared, and most of the gear from the ship.

The land proved to be the Bermudas, a "land never inhabited by any Christian or heathen people," and a name of dread to the seamen of those days as "ever esteemed and reputed a most prodigious and enchanted place, affording nothing but gusts, storms, and foul weather." The island, however, completely belied its evil reputation. It was found to be a very garden of nature, "the richest, healthfullest, and most pleasing land as ever man put foot upon." The energy of Somers supplied his companions with abundance of fish and hog's flesh, to which they soon added turtles, wild-fowl, and various fruits. The island gave promise of abundant resources to make it a possession of permanent value. Pearls and ambergris, both of the best quality, abounded, and whales were seen in numbers off the shore. For ten months the emigrants stayed on the island, during which time two children were born and one marriage solemnized. Meanwhile the leaders of the expedition did not forget their original object. Two pinnaces were built and fitted as well as they could be with the gear saved from the wreck of the Sea Venture. These were stored with salted hogs'-flesh and other food, and on the 10th of May the voyagers set sail for Virginia.

● ● ● Editor's Note:

Later writers have indicated that the vessel reconstructed from the remains of the Sea Venture was christened - appropriately enough - the Deliverence. It successfully reached Jamestown, Virginia with the survivors of the Sea Venture. Later the Deliverence left Jamestown and to this date no one knows its fate.

Today a full scale replica of the Deliverence is open for inspection at St. Georges Harbour a few miles from the capital of Bermuda, Hamiltan. A \$100.00 commemorative gold coin dated 1977 has just been issued by Bermuda honoring the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and exhibits on its reverse an "original work of art portraying the first ship to be built in Bermuda, the Deliverence."



A Uniface VERMONT Ryder 2.

(TN-65)

● ● from Harold W. Hauser; Glen Ridge, New Jersey

I recently obtained a uniface reverse of Vermont Ryder 2. On the blank obverse is painted the capital letter A over 193j (but not readily visible on the photograph.)



The specimen weighs about 120 grains (on a postage scale) and is genuine in the opinion of those to whom I have shown it.

Are other uniface Vermonts known or is this one unique? And -- does anyone know the significance of the A over 193j ?



MORE on the Importation of 1749 Halfpence & Farthings

(TN-57A)

● ● from Walter H. Breen; Berkeley, California

The quantities of halfpence and farthings dated 1749 which were shipped over to the New England colonies, and used for retiring Massachusetts notes, have been published. They work out to ten tons of Tower Mint copper coins having a face value of £2111 4s 8d, in 100 casks, per ship "Mermaid", under Captain John Montague, arriving September 18, 1749.

Crosby gives the breakdown into 7 Tons 18 Cwt of halfpence = £1699 10s 8d (p.228) = 726,800 halfpence (Newman, "English and Bungtown Halfpence," *Studies on Money in Early America*, p.146); plus 2 Tons 2 Cwt of farthings = £441 14s 0d = "573,184 farthings" (Newman, loc.cit.).

There is a discrepancy in the quantities. Even aside from the ambiguity over long vs. short tons, £1699 10s 8d works out to 33,990 Shillings 8 Pence = 407,888 Pence = 815,776 halfpence; and £441 14s in farthings works out to 8,834 Shillings, or 106,008 Pence = 424,032 Farthings. I suspect that Newman made his calculation from the weights in tons and cwt rather from the stated face values.



On CROSBY'S "MISSING LETTER"

(TN-58A)

● ● from Walter H. Breen; Berkeley, California

I have great respect for Ray Williamson, but in the instance of TN-58 I am not sure we can come to the same conclusions. How would Henry Guy, at the Treasury Offices in London, have known whether the Boston mint was still in operation? That Guy deliberately used so vague an expression as "a Mint has hitherto been kept up and employed at Boston in New England" tells me precisely that he did not know whether the mint was still in operation or not. Now from other lines of evidence we know that the proprietors John Hull and Robert Sa(u)nderson worked the mint on 7-year contracts, a figure held sacred by the Puritans because of its biblical associations, and that the last of these was dated May 12, 1675 (though only signed as of July 9), therefore expiring as of May 12, 1682. There is no evidence of its renewal, and John Hull died October 1, 1683. Saunderson is unlikely to have gone on coining without a contract. But the Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter was revoked as of October 23, 1684, and punitive measures invoked. How then could coinage have gone on publicly after that?

● ● ● and a reply from Raymond H. Williamson; Lynchburg, Virginia

(TN-58B)

I am pleased to have found and secured publication of this item, even though it turns out to contain no new or definitive language. Crosby and Breen agree that the correct interpretation of the language "... a Mint has hitherto been kept up and employed at Boston in New England ..." is that in all probability the coining had stopped well before 22 November 1684 (the date of the letter quoted by Crosby), and hence before 24 November 1684 (the date of the "missing" letter); this language is identical in both letters. Crosby and Breen may well be right -- both generally are! Crosby correctly identifies this language as "a vague expression." Breen's additional data on coinage contract expiration and the Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter revocation October 23, 1684 are very persuasive. I think I'll join them and share their opinion on the termination date, and give up my idea that the mint was an ongoing operation in November 1684. Perhaps the publication of the missing letter may smoke out some more definite answers.



Theory and Counter-Theory on the 1700 VOCE POPULI .

from John J. Horan, Ph.D.; State College, PA.

(TN-66)

The 1700 VOCE POPULI Halfpenny is a curious phenomenon. Of the 20 known varieties of farthings and halfpennies in this series, 19 are unmistakably dated 1760. How is it that one variety should appear to be 60 years older than the others?

Before beginning to answer this question a definition of terms is in order. There is only one variety which has any claim at all to the 1700 status. This is Nelson 6A (Vlack 5D, Dowle & Finn 568, Zelinka 5-D a), a coin identical in all respects to Nelson 6 (Vlack 5E, Dowle & Finn 567, Zelinka 5-D) except that it lacks a stem above the middle "0" of the date. Hence it reads 1700 instead of 1760. Several other varieties have been offered at various times as the 1700. The most frequent of these misattributions is Nelson 2. The stem of the "6" on this variety merges with the baseline and is consequently easy to overlook. I have also seen photographs of a Nelson 7 purporting to read 1700; however, I am skeptical as there appear to be "problems" in the area directly above the middle "0". Finally, a Nelson 13 was recently offered as a 1700 by a major auction firm, but the "lost stem" was due to a heavy die break.

Now then, how did the Nelson 6A variety come to read 1700? One theory posits that this variety was actually struck in 1700. Such is quite unlikely as the same dies also yielded coins dated 1760. The most commonly offered explanation for the occurrence of this variety is that the 1700 date resulted from a die cutter's error and after striking a few coins, as the story goes, the die cutter realized his error and quickly corrected it by adding a stem to the middle "0". All subsequent coins thus read 1760 and are commonly known today as "1760/00 overdates."

I have not been able to trace the origin of this theory. Nor have I been able to find early published references to the 1700 variety. The coin was not known to Nelson when he authored his classic book on Irish coinage in 1905. In the absence of data to the contrary, I wonder if in fact the 1700 variety is of 19th or 20th century vintage?

Vlack estimates a total of about 5 known examples. I have not examined the British Museum, Redbook, or Vlack plate coin examples. However, I was told by a former owner that one of these pieces has slight flan scratches in the area above the middle "0" possibly indicating alteration of a "6" after minting. The "6" may indeed have been formed by adding a stem to a "0" on the die, but such would not preclude its later removal from the few known examples. Though my own specimen looks unaltered, it's in miserable condition and thus cannot settle the issue.

I wonder if other CNL readers have had experience with this variety and would care to comment?

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